



WISH FULFILMENT

Kalpavriksha, also known as kalpataru, kalpadruma and kalpapādapa, is a mythological, wish-fulfilling divine tree said to fulfill all desires. It was mentioned in Sanskrit literature from the earliest sources onwards.

Sage Durvasha meditated under the kalpavriksha. A kalpavriksha is mentioned in the Sanskrit work Mānasara as a royal emblem. In Hemādri's work Caturvargaçintama, the kalpavriksha is said to be a tree of gold and precious stones.



LITERACY & PROGRESS

Literacy in India is key for socio-economic progress, and the Indian literacy rate grew to 75.06 per cent in 2011 from 12 per cent at the end of the British rule.

Although this was a greater than six-fold improvement, the level

is well below the world average literacy rate of 84 per cent, and India currently has the largest illiterate population of any nation on earth.

The 2011 census indicated a 2001-2011 decadal literacy growth of 9.2 per cent.



NATURE WALK

University's rich biodiversity

Nitin Lawate

On a voyage through the prolific wilderness of the University of Pune campus, nature lovers learn a thing or two about the vast green cover that the premises encompass

SAMARTH GOYAL

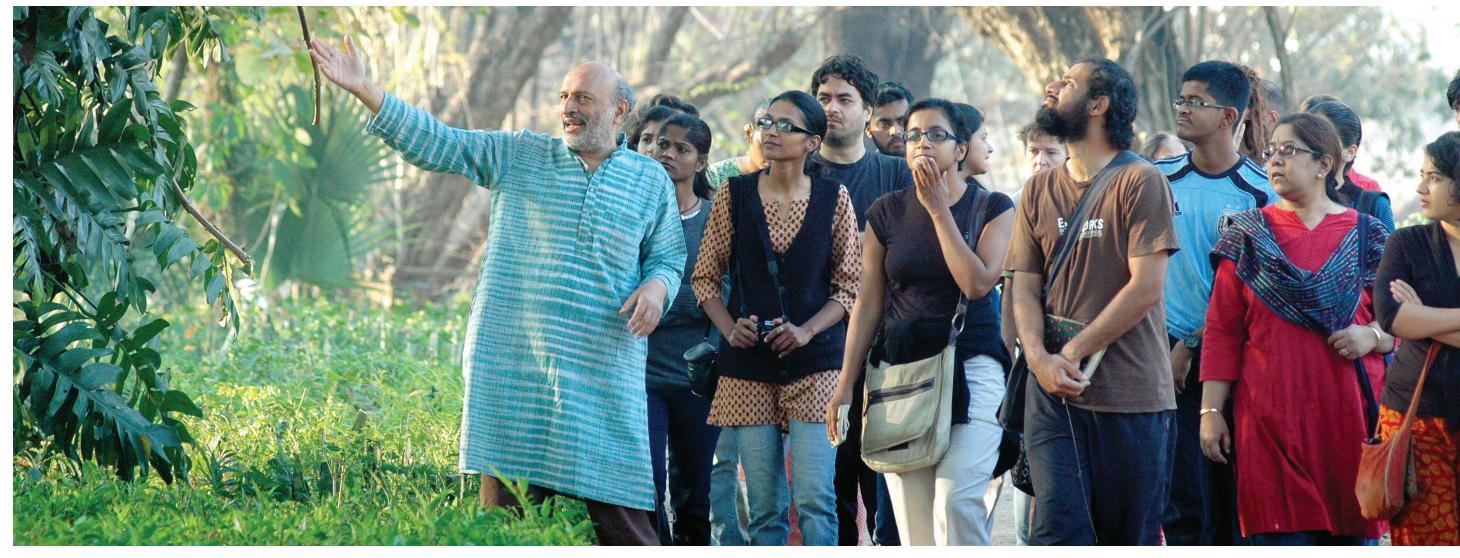
The idea of striking up a conversation with a tree might come across as a frivolous one for most; for Dr Arvind Gupta, an engineer by profession and a flora lover by instinct, the thought is not in the least outlandish. The nature enthusiast recently led an entourage of 25 like-minded people in a tree walk organised in the University of Pune (UoP) campus. Although the group consisted of individuals hailing from different countries and disparate age groups, they were all unified by a common zeal for biodiversity.

The walk began at the gardens of the Lalit Kala Kendra behind the main university building. Dr Gupta beautifully embellished the experience by narrating a variety of anecdotes, interspersed with scientific factoids, along the way. "The Kesariya Shyam tree," Dr Gupta pointed out, "is one of the most commonly found

trees by the roadside in our country."

THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING KALPAVRIKSHA

Upon arriving near the great Kalpavriksha, he informed the group that the mega-tree is capable of cradling about 33 men all at once. Dr Gupta shared with the group yet another piece of trivia about the indigenous nomenclature of the great Kalpavriksha, which has an average lifespan of 5,000 years. After a certain point, the tree sheds a major portion of its trunk, making it hollow on the inside, he said. "As many as 33 people can easily get inside this hollow trunk and sit comfortably, just like one big family would; hence the name Kalpavriksha!" he added, much to the amusement of the audience. To make the group comprehend the enormity of the trunk, Dr Gupta made nine people surround the tree. He then asked each of them to hug the base, illustrating how their fingertips just about met



ALL EYES AND EARS: Nature enthusiasts flock Dr Arvind Gupta as her shares interesting botanical tidbits

as they hugged it.

We proceeded to Alice Gardens, known for its dense foliage and a variety of flora. While walking, Dr Gupta took us back to the days when, as a bored kid, he'd create toys out of dry foliage shed by trees. Holding a quick demo, he plucked a leaf from a Peepal tree and morphed it into a cat in the blink of an eye. He then handed it over to the youngest girl in the group, Chitrangta (8), who was delighted to receive the impromptu souvenir.

The Alice Garden chapter of our walk began with us getting reacquainted with the Ashoka tree. "The tree derives its name from the straight

The rain tree mystery

- Dr Gupta spoke extensively about Albizia Saman, commonly known as the rain tree. "Everyone is divided on how the name of the tree came into being," he informed. He then went on to share with the group three different versions of the story. "Some feel that the name is inspired from the canopy-like, umbrella-

shaped arrangement of the leaves; others say it's because of the way the leaves fold inwards when it rains. The third set of believers trust the reason to be the manner in which juices seep from the fruits of the tree. "Nobody quite knows which of the three stories is true. Feel free to take your pick!" he added.

trunk, which resembles the replica of the Ashoka pillar in Varanasi and Delhi," he said. Further, he spoke about the colonialist nature of the weed growth patterns observed

here, detailing how one breed competes with an existing one to wrest territorial control. On being asked whether the growth is detrimental to the bio-equilibrium, he simply

About Arvind Gupta

- A product of IIT Kanpur, Dr Gupta, a Gandhian and a social servant, is known for his book, Matchstick Models and Other Scientific Experiments. The book, reprinted in 12 languages, contains inventive ways for children to make toys from trash.

shrugged, adding, "They're plants, so it's okay. They're not very harmful." At the end of the fulfilling exercise, we had managed to cover about 300 different varieties of trees.

IT'S DABBA TIME

Tiffin Services

Jalan Foods.....	020-66824222
Bhojan time.....	020-66823226, 8975003310
Deepas Mess	020-66826096
Annapurna Bhojanalay.....	9370884118
Food Pint Tiffin Services.....	9371848779
Amishka Tiffin.....	020-26501230
Gayathri Tiffin Supplier	9767654659
MS Tiffin Service.....	9527555499
RD Caterers	9890881397
Mathura Mess	9657274213
Hot & Sweet Paradise.....	996015520
Pretush Snack Centre	9326436820
Tiffin Bits Service.....	9552002981
Vithu Mauli Mess.....	020-24229896
Annapurna	9822362524
Desi Food	9637489039
Jeevandhani Lunch Home.....	9860913885
Mandeep's Kitchen	9765390828
Home Mess.....	020-65276394
Sneha Tiffin Services.....	020-65276394
Anushka Tiffin Service	9923344410
Shree Annapurna Mess.....	9423755965
Prasanna Tiffin Services	9850798543
Nexus Hospitality Services.....	9960608492
Pratham Tiffin Services	9404613111
Raju Guest House & Mess.....	8888429066
Saisha Caterers	9370063453
Shree Sai Tiffin Service	020-26817819

NURSES FOR HOME CARE



Nursing Bureaus

Janseva	9850957646
Gold Age Nursing Home	64701919
Good Samaritan Nursing Home.....	66826851
A One Nurse.....	66829050
Shwas Nurse.....	9373313301
Sundaram	66826851
Pune Central.....	66491719
Spandan	66822305
A One Enterprises	66821112
Saurabh	66824867
Sevasadan.....	9766654594
Kiran	66820481
Trisha Nurses Seva Bureau.....	66829375
Sanjeevani.....	26991375
Chaya.....	66824488
Sai Nursing Home	66829941
Seva Nursing Home	24470127
Sahara	26442585
Grace	26505584
Sanjivani.....	25389666
Rekha	24460363
Easha	25533873
Sanjeevani.....	26991375

VOX POPULI

What was the most significant human achievement of last week? And what was the most shameful human act?



FARRUKH JEHAN KHAN

(PR Professional)

A significant human achievement recently which struck a chord was Indian American journalist, Manu Raju, receiving the White House Correspondents journalism award for 2012 presented by President Obama himself. A security guard was shot dead at the University of Pune by a youth for enforcing discipline on the campus. This is just so sad!



KRIPESH KUTTY

(IT Professional)

Obama signaling the end of the war in Afghanistan by pulling out troops is a significant undertaking. I found it very shameful that Achala Sachdev, during her last days was not visited by a single member of the so-called 'Indian film fraternity'. Where is all the closeness they rant about?

Do you have a story to tell us about Pune?

GET IN TOUCH

- You visited a government office like the passport office, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) and so on and had a good/bad experience
- You filed an RTI application and got quick information/were denied

- You want to share documents you have procured under the RTI Act or any other source
- You are saddened with the tree felling in your neighbourhood

- You approached a police station/chowky to file a complaint—tell us about your good/bad experiences
- Do your public amenity agencies harass you for services they owe you?
- Any other vital issue...

Contact: Suchismita Pai, Laxmi Birajdar, Bhushan Sawant or Dheeraj Bengrut
at citynowlife365@gmail.com
Call 020-25534888/25538835 or
8806 365 365